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Popular Lizards Noted for Their Medicinal Uses



Phoenix Montoya



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Belonging to the reptile class, the lizards have been known for many medicinal uses. Their healing and preventive capacities have been recorded throughout the world. Although most of them lack scientific studies, their names have grown popular with their distinctive medicinal uses. Used as a cure for many ailments and diseases, the following are the most popular lizards of today – ranging from those who have undergone laboratory studies to types that possess no scientific evidence.

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Gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum*)



Image source

The Gila monster is a type of venomous lizard that grows up to 24 inches long. It is found in southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico.

The Gila monster's spit contains the protein named *exendin-4* that can regulate blood glucose. In 2005, the drug Exenatide marketed as Byetta was approved by the FDA for type 2 diabetes. Exenatide is the synthetic version of exendin-4 that was obtained from the Gila monster's saliva.

Beaded lizard (*Heloderma horridum*)



Image source

The beaded lizard is a close relative of Gila monster which is another venomous lizard. It is a native of Mexico and southern Guatemala. The beaded is larger than the Gila monster as the former ranges from 24 to 36 inches.

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Like the Gila monster, the saliva of the beaded lizard also contains an enzyme that can control the blood sugar. An endocrinologist, Dr. John Eng named this protein *exendin-3*. Unfortunately, the study has also revealed that this protein can also dilate the blood vessels.

Spix (*Tropidurus hispidus*)



Image source

The Spix is a tropical iguanid lizard measuring from 68 to 114 millimeters. It is a medium to large sized lizard usually found in abundance at South America.

While the Spix's tail is brewed as a tea for asthma, tonsillitis and pharyngitis, its internal organs are used for skin infections. In an evaluation for its antimicrobial activity, the Spix's decoction has been found out effective with aminoglycoside for bacterial infection but, ineffective when used alone.

Argentine black and white tegu (*Tupinambis merianae*)



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*Image source*

The Argentine black and white tegu is also known as the Argentine giant tegu. It is omnivorous terrestrial specie that lives in tropical rain forests of east and central South America.

Argentine black and white tegu are said to be docile and can be good pets. Sadly, this lizard is also used as cure for sore throat, cough, influenza, swelling and even tumor.

Its body fat is either eaten raw or used as ointment for the affected area. But, in a study made for its antimicrobial activity against *Escherichia coli* or *Staphylococcus aureus*, the body fat of Argentine black and white tegu did not demonstrate any antimicrobial action against these bacteria.

**Green Iguana** (*Iguana iguana*)*Image source*

Also known as Common iguana, the Green iguana is also a native of central and South America. It is a herbivore that often grows to 4.9 feet from head to tail. A Green iguana can be demanding to care for but can be a very good pet.

Based on the study conducted in Brazil, the Green iguana's body fat was found out to be effective for sore throat and most types of pains like earache, rheumatoid and osteoarthritis. It is also used for furuncles and tumor. Its body fat can either be applied as an ointment or as a drop into the ear or maybe eaten raw.

The Green iguana's bones are turned into powder to be incorporated with teas or food for rheumatic diseases as arthritis and osteoarthritis.

**Indian spiny-tailed lizard** (*Uromastyx hardwickii*)*Image source*

Also known as Hardwicke's, the Indian spiny-tailed lizard is found in the Thar Desert, Kutch, in the dry surroundings of Pakistan and India. It is a herbivore specie of agamid lizards which lives in groups.

Locals hunt this reptile for their meat and for medicine. The fat extracts of the Indian spiny-tailed lizard is *believed* to have an aphrodisiac property.

**Rock monitor** (*Varanus albigularis*)



*Image source*

The Rock monitor lizard can be found in South Africa. It is the heaviest bodied and the second longest lizard in the continent of Africa measuring up to 2 meters. The rock monitor lizard is also called as the lepe, legavaan and white-throated monitor.

The blood of the Rock monitor is said to be a cure for the HIV/ AIDS virus. In the Ugandan black market each Rock monitor is sold for 175 US dollars. However, the Rock monitor's blood as treatment for AIDS is still considered as a myth.

**Tokay gecko** (*Gekko gekko*)



*Image source*

Tokay gecko is a nocturnal gecko that lives in rainforest trees and cliffs. It is the second largest gecko species reaching 11-15 inches in males while 7-11 inches in females. Tokay gecko is noted for their loud vocalizations. In the Philippines, Tokay gecko is known as tuko or toco. Besides the Philippines, this lizard can also be found in Southeast Asian countries.

Tokay gecko is being sold for its medicinal property to cure cancer and as treatment for Aids. Contrary to this, Tokay gecko's healing uses are not yet proven scientifically.

**Common house Gecko** (*Hemidactylus frenatus*)





*Image source*

The Common house gecko is a native of northern Africa and southeastern Asia. Also known as house lizard or butiki, it is a nocturnal reptile about 7.5–15 cm. In some provincial parts of the Philippines, common house gecko is used for asthma cure. This reptile is usually roasted then eaten. Interestingly, it can also be eaten alive. By taking a house lizard twice a week, one interviewee has cited a complete relief for his asthma. However, a house lizard for such cure has no scientific evidence. More to this, one study has revealed that house lizards can also cause asthma.

#### Note:




The author does not encourage alternative medicine with the following lizards. This article is only for information. Most animals cited here are on the verge of extinction.

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**chy99**
- I haven't heard of this before. But anyway, i'll prefer plant-based medicine.
- Posted 53 months ago
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**Brenden Koo**
- Great article, mate. Evidently medicine is trying to extend its reach to inadequately explored circles of the natural world such as this. Probably the dinosaurs would be rolling in their graves at this. :)
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**john doe**
- Perfect work.
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- 

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- Perfect timing! The "tuko" scam is on top of the news, very well composed. Prolific article Phoenix.
- Posted 53 months ago
- 

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- Interesting and so well presented information. I learned much from this article.
- Posted 53 months ago

**Francois Hagnere**

---

What a great post! I must confess I learnt a lot and I love all your photos. Aren't they lovely?  
Thank you Phoenix.

Posted 53 months ago

**JennyHeart**

---

Very interesting information! Voted up!

Posted 53 months ago

**Kaleidoscope Acres** Ranked #37 in [Alternative Medicine](#)

---

When actual studies have been done to prove medical benefits that's one thing but I hate it when animals are killed and eaten due to wrongly held beliefs that bothers me.

Posted 53 months ago

**Guimo Pantuhan**

---

The gecko right away popped into my head. And I could not help but smile.. :-)

Posted 53 months ago

**Sandy James**

---

Very fascinating information.

Posted 53 months ago

**deepblue**

---

Interesting healing options from lizards, kabayan.

Posted 53 months ago

**Joe Dorish**

---

Cool stuff! Had no idea lizards had medicinal properties.

Posted 53 months ago

**Aunty Ann**

---

I'd rather see them in the wild than being carved up... but it's certainly an eye opener as to what these little critters are capable of!

Posted 53 months ago

**Donata L.**

---

Wow! Very interesting piece....I had no idea! Some really awesome pics. Thanks for sharing.  
Voted up.

Posted 53 months ago

**Jessie Agudo**

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Nice photos! Interesting...

Posted 52 months ago



**Sharifa Sanderson** Ranked #101 in [Alternative Medicine](#)

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So those witches' brews with lizard tails may have had some use, lol

Posted 51 months ago



**Francois Hagnere**

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I am revisiting this very interesting post. Great work, Phoenix! Thank you.

Posted 46 months ago



**Kimberley Heit**

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Great article, I learnt a few new things!

Posted 45 months ago

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